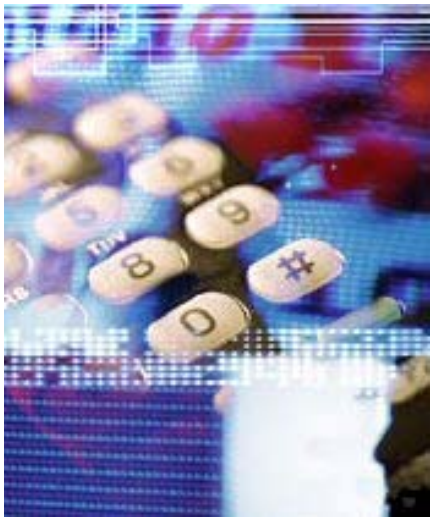


From MUDs as (virtual) SPACES

To (hybrid) SPACES as MUDs

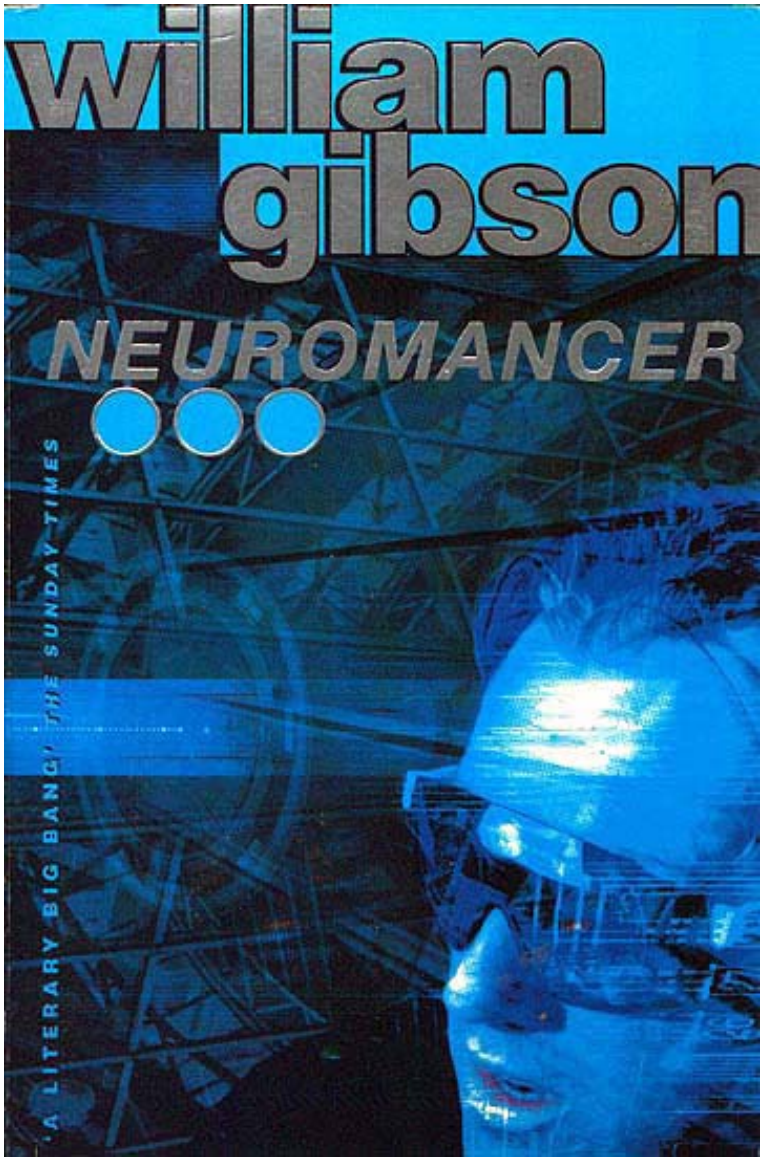
Mobile Technologies as Interfaces of Hybrid Spaces

Adriana de Souza e Silva, PhD
Assistant Professor of Communication
North Carolina State University



Mobile Minded, by Mieke Gerritzen and Geert Lovink

1990’s: Internet = cyberspace



Neuromancer (1984)

- Case felt “imprisioned” in his body

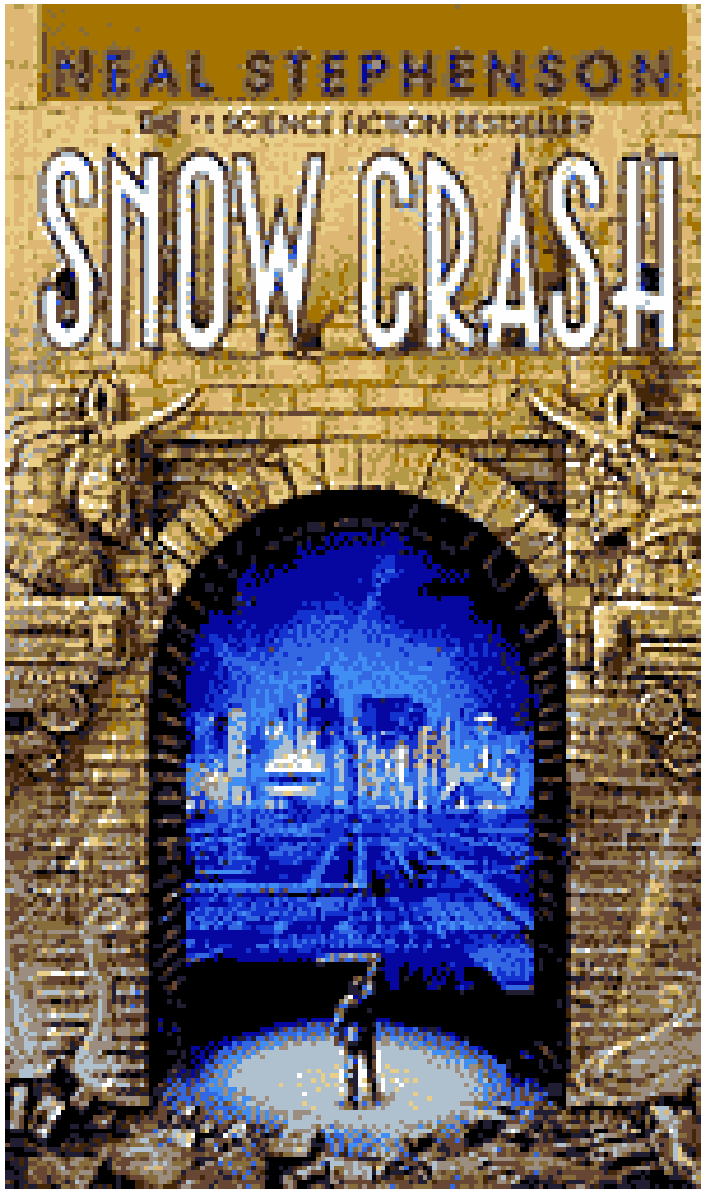
-Consensual hallucination

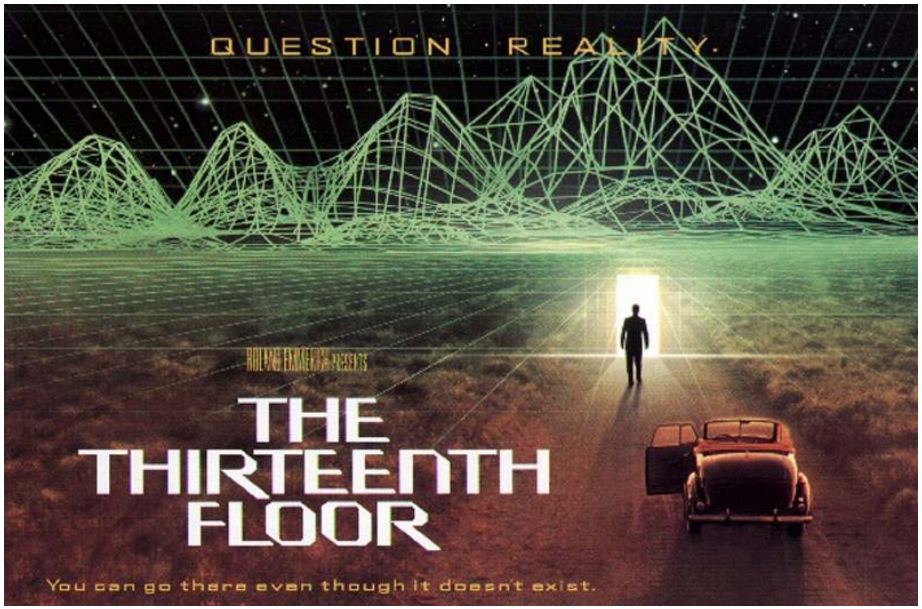
-Graphic representation

-Non-place for the mind

(Gibson, 1984; Stephenson, 1992)

1990’s: Internet = cyberspace



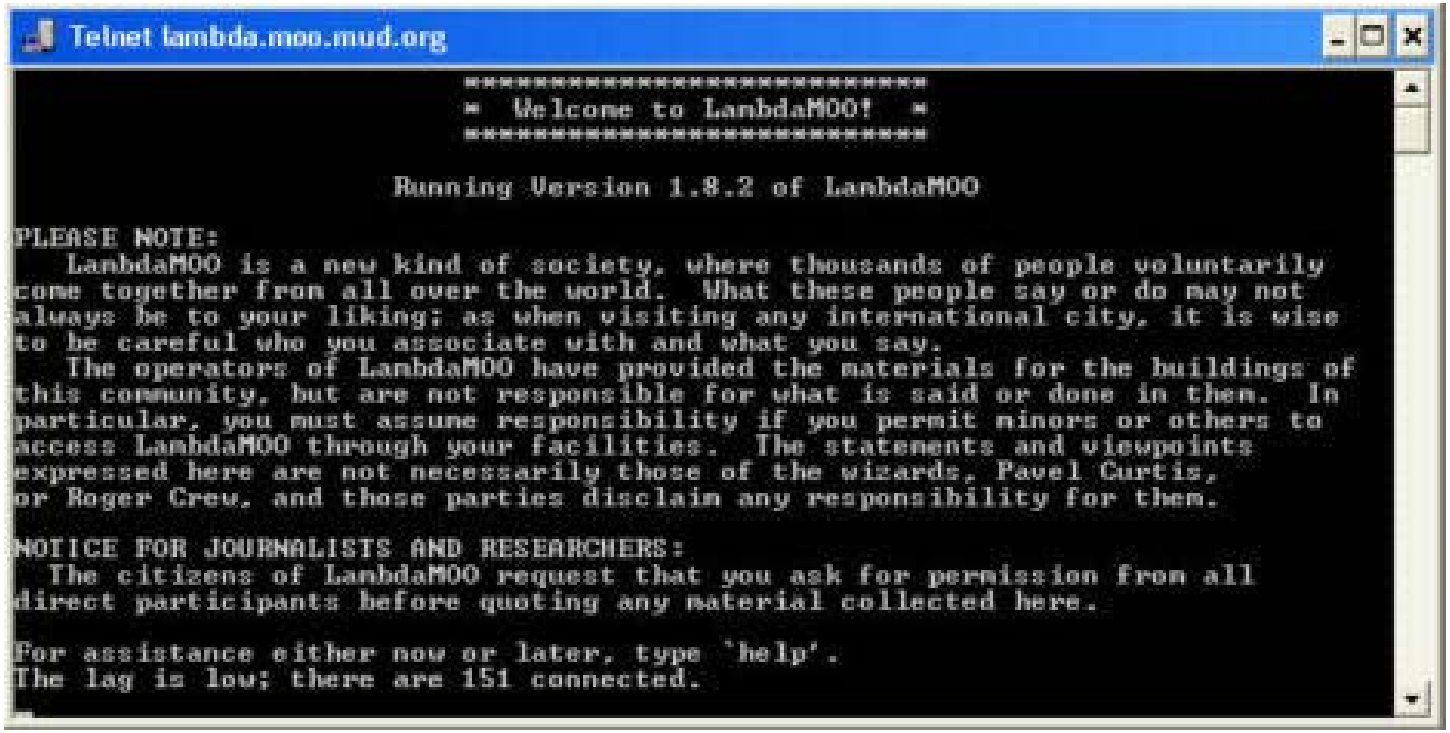




1990’s: Internet = social space

MUDs (Multiuser Dungeons)

MMORPG (Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Games)



(Dibbell, 1999; Turkle, 1995; Rheingold, 2000)

1990’s: Internet = social space

MUDs (Multiuser Dungeons)

MMORPG (Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Games





(Dibbell, 1999; Turkle, 1995; Rheingold, 2000)

1990’s: Internet – computer interfaces

Static interfaces = Keyboard, monitor, mouse









(Johnson, 1997; Murray, 1999)

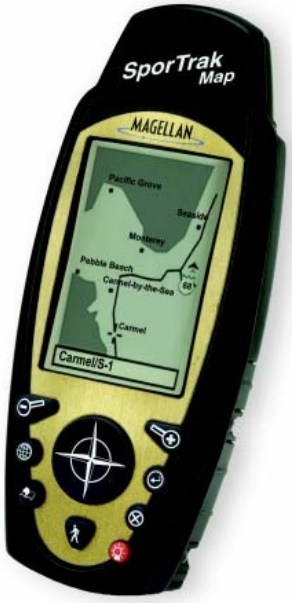
2000’s: Mobile Internet

Mobile interfaces = cell phones, PDAs, laptops









2000’s: Mobile Internet

What happens with our concept of the Internet when:

(1) the interfaces to access it become mobile?

(2) the Internet becomes embedded in physical spaces?

2000’s: Mobile Internet

What happens with our concept of the Internet when:

(1) the interfaces to access it become mobile?

(2) the Internet becomes embedded in physical spaces?

→Blurring the borders between physical and digital spaces (hybrid spaces)

→Bringing “virtual communities” into physical spaces

2000’s: Mobile Internet

Hybrid Reality Games: bringing multiuser environments into public spaces

Botfighters, It’s Alive (2001, Sweden) | http://www.botfighters.com



- Widen the game environment
- The player is the avatar
- Physical space becomes the game board
- No gameplay (in-between)

Change the perception of the city

Taxi 31: has four phones, bills ups to $4,000, and brags on the website that he’s driven 30 kilometers outside the city to get in battles. Wired News, 02.08.2002

Players: 25 – 35

Sweden / Finland / Ireland / Russia



Mogi, Newt Games (2004, Japan) | http://www.mogimogi.com

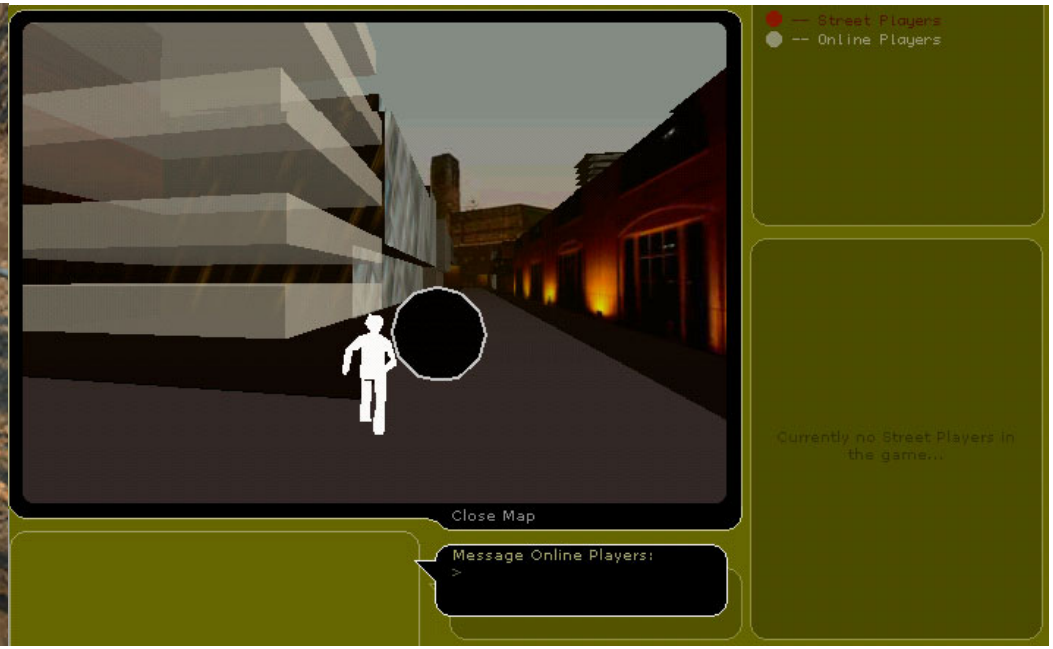


Photos: Paul Baron

“The game provides a data-layer over the city of Tokyo. As you move through the city, if you check a map on your mobile phone screen, you'll see nearby items you can pick up and nearby players you can meet or trade with.” The Feature, 2004

Blast Theory + Mixed Reality Lab





Uncle Roy All Around You

http://www.uncleroyallaroundyou.co.uk

Westminster, London (UK), 2003

Manchester (UK), 04.28 - 5.08.2004

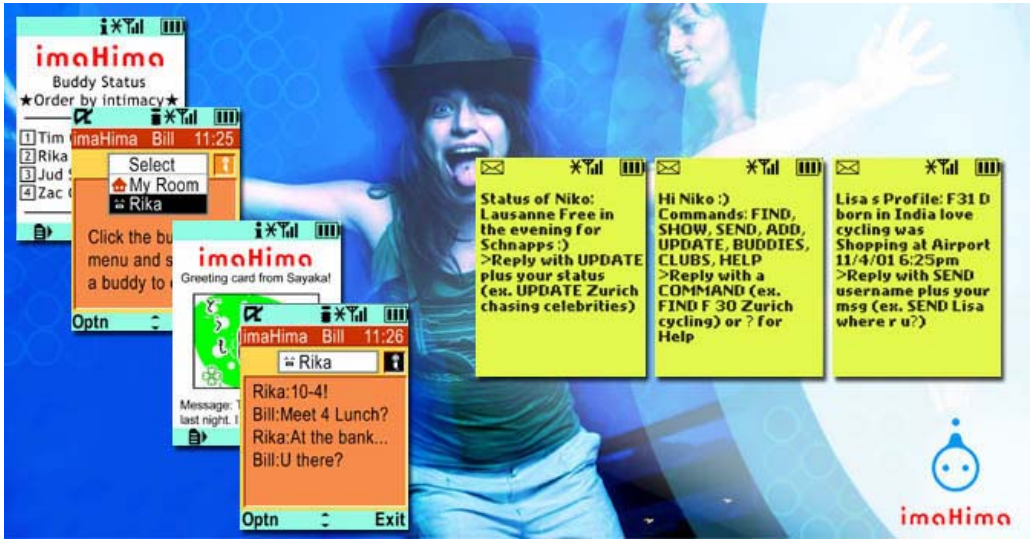
West Bromwich (UK), 05.27 – 06.05.2004

Digital Graffito (Germany, Siemens + Ars Electronica Center, 2007)



Virtual post-its: attaching SMS messages to geographical points in space.

ImaHima (Japan, 2001)



Location-based Instant Messaging

http://www.imahima.com

2000’s: Mobile Internet

Changing the concept of the cell phone













Cell phones are no longer ‘mobile telephones’ (Rheingold, 2002)

2000’s: Mobile Internet

Mobile phones (Internet + location awareness) = personal computer of the 21st century

Concepts: immersion → location

2000’s: Mobile Internet

Consequences of the use of mobile technologies

- The emergence of a new meaning for digital spaces and, consequently, for the Internet.
- A new perception of urban spaces and new notion of geography (“Geography indeed matters”)
- The reshaping of social relationships.
- A new notion of embedded or enfolded spaces